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Deborah J Ash 03/16/2007 12:29:39 PM From DB/Inbox: Feb 07 cables

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Text:

UNCLAS SENSITIVE KYIV 00499

SIPDIS
CXKIEV:

ACTION: POL
INFO: DTRO DAO AMB CONS PAS DCM ECON CUST AID RAO

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: POL:GKENT
DRAFTED: POL:CTURNACIOGLU
CLEARED: NONE

VZCZCKVI771
PP RUEHC RUEHZG RUCNCIS
DE RUEHKV #0499 0591518
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 281518Z FEB 07
FM AMEMBASSY KYIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1360
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS KYIV 000499

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [UNHRC](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: UKRAINE: RELIGIOUS, ETHNIC GROUPS IN ODESA CONDEMN
ANTI-SEMITISM AS "OUR COMMON PAIN"

REF: KYIV 450

(U) Sensitive but unclassified, please handle accordingly.
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1. (SBU) On February 26, representatives of more than 40 religious denominations and ethnic communities from the Odesa oblast signed a joint statement condemning the February 17-18 desecration in Odesa of Holocaust memorials, a Jewish cemetery, and a memorial to a well-known Odesan Jew (reftel). The vandalism had been immediately condemned by Odesa Mayor Eduard Hurvits, who is Jewish himself, the Odesan police, and the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and investigations were quickly launched. The spokesman for the Jewish community center in Odesa city told us on February 27 that a task force of local and national law enforcement officials has identified suspects, but no arrests have been made.

2. (U) The statement, produced at a joint session of the Coordinating and Consultative Council on Religious-Secular Accord and Council of Ethnic Communities, lamented a lack of historical awareness of the Holocaust on the part of the younger generation and called on the government to do everything possible to bring the vandals to justice. It said that the vandalism was "a well-planned provocation rather than a spontaneous action committed by a marginal part of society," and that the attempt to spark anti-Semitism was part of "a political struggle." A rabbi at the session said that if the authorities did not react properly to the provocation, it could encourage similar acts against other ethnic and religious groups. City Council Secretary Prokopenko described the vandalism as: "a deep psychological trauma for the citizens of Odesa. This is our common pain...it is directed against all ethnic groups. We have to do everything possible to ensure this does not happen again."

¶3. (SBU) Comment: It is reassuring to see that in a city that prides itself on its diversity and history of multiculturalism, the citizenry publicly rejects such hostile acts and condemns anti-Semitism. Signatories included 19 religious denominations, including all major Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic churches in Ukraine in addition to Jewish communities, as well as 23 various ethnic communities, including Roma.

¶4. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.
Taylor